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Threads

OF

Thought.

BY
ANNIE ARMSTRONG.



WASHINGTON :
BRENTANO BROTHERS.

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DEDICATED

TO

MY MOTHER.

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SCATTERED THREADS.

O HEART, BE TRUE !

O heart, be strong !
There is so much for all to bear,
So much to do in life's short day,
Think not that thou shouldst rest ; prepare
To do thy part and take thy share,
And join the fray ;
Gird on the sword of might and battle wrong.
Be strong, my heart, be strong !

O heart, be brave !
Else in the thickest of the fight
At times thou mayest fail and shrink ;
Remember thou art in God's sight,
And care not what, if thou art right,
The world may think ;
Bright victory's banner yet shall o'er thee wave.
Be brave, my heart, be brave !

O heart, be true !
True to thyself and to thy God,
Though all around thy path may change ;
Though oft the road that thou hast trod,
To those that hear no guiding word,
Seems hard and strange ;
Whatever else the whole wide world may do,
Be true, my heart, be true !

PICKING BERRIES THAT DAY.

A midsummer morning, a gentle breeze
Lazily moving the boughs of trees,
A sweetbrier scented way;
Tall grasses losing their gems of dew,
With golden sunbeams shimmering through;
A group of children where wild woods grew,
Picking berries that day.

We were four in all, and May, our pet,
Whose years scarce numbered five summers yet,
Laughing in happy play,
Herself the fairest blossom that grew,
Was gathering flowers of every hue,
And decking herself, and Clarence, and Lou,
Picking berries that day.

Beneath the shade of a spreading oak,
Clarence, the eldest, thoughtfully spoke,

With eyes fixed far away,—
“I wonder who”—and just then the fall
Of a stone was heard from the mossy wall—
“Will have the happiest life of all,
Picking berries to-day?”

“Why, me!” cried dear little May : with a start,
I cried, as I pressed her to my heart,
“Darling, I hope you may.”
How could I see that flowers would wave
Over the mound of a little grave?
As the baby voice that answer gave,
Picking berries that day!

Sweet baby eyes of azure blue,
Ye are heavenly now ! Your words were true,
Dear little Angel May ;
Yours is indeed the happiest fate—
To have is sweeter by far than to wait.
More blessed are ye in your heavenly state
Than when picking berries that day.

A DREAM OF A PICTURE.

As one night in silence I pondered
O'er dreams of the buried past,
Down long years my memory wandered,
And lengthening shadows cast ;
Then drowsily closing my eyelids,
I slept, and lo ! in my dreams
The bright gates of vision were opened,
And flooded my soul with their beams.

My life work was laid out before me
In pictures of workmanship rare ;
And some parts were all dark with sorrow,
While others were bright and fair.
There were records of good and of evil,
Of promises broken and kept—
On some I gazed almost enraptured,
But from others I turned me and wept.

I said to the angel who showed them,
 "Who has toiled all this canvas to fill
With views of my past life, so perfect
 That I seem to be living it still?
Have fairies' deft fingers been working
 All these years the task to complete,
And sent you, a messenger angel,
 To place this result at my feet?"

He replied, "You have painted each picture;
 Every day with its pleasure and care
You have added one more to the number
 That you see ranged in beauty there.
And I am sent here by the Father
 With comfort your burden to light;
For, looking down on you from heaven,
 He saw you were weary to night."

I cried, "Had I known that daily
 I was painting a picture rare,
How I would have improved the moments,
 And labored with marvelous care!
I would have had bright deeds and glorious
 Built up like a massive dome,
And a life work all grand and victorious
 Prepared for the harvest home.

“But what comfort can this work afford me,
This wonderful product of art?
Why, its very perfection but shows me
The imperfectness on my part;
Each fault is so visibly pictured,
And plain to the eyes of men,
That I shrink from viewing it closely,
And my heart aches within me; and then—

“Do you call it a kindness to show me
A life that is almost misspent?
I ask you, where is the comfort
From the Being by whom you were sent?”
Thus I cried in my passionate sorrow,
But, lifting my downcast head,
The angel smiled sweetly upon me
With compassionate kindness, and said:

“You are weary to-night with your labors,
Your feet ache with the path you have trod,
And so you are tempted to murmur,
And question the goodness of God;
But I will endeavor to aid you,
And lighten your burden of pain,
So that with a clear understanding
You may take up your task again.”

Then he led me away from the others,
To a group that were standing apart,
Which I scrutinized eagerly, closely,
To see what could comfort impart ;
But what my surprise and my wonder
When I saw on the canvas white
Not a single figure or color,
But all blank as a veil of light !

He said to me, "This is the future,
Which, when you have painted at last,
Will be joined to the unfinished picture,
And make one sketch of the past."
Then my heart grew more light in a moment,
And I sang in a cheerful tone,
For I thought, "Though my past was a failure,
The future is still my own,"

.

THE SUMMER'S MESSAGE.

What is the message the Summer brings?

The fair new Summer of bud and bloom,
That sweeps from the south upon airy wings,
Filling the earth with a sweet perfume ;
Listen ! From every tree a voice ;
The birds are singing their song, " Rejoice ! "

Down in the meadow the lilies blow,

Buttercups wave when the breezes come,
Over them lazily to and fro

The brown bee flies with a drowsy hum ;
Murmering on in his slumberous voice
To the flowers, " The Summer has come, Rejoice ! "

Up in the mountains, half hid from sight,
The brooklet dances and leaps along ;

Mirrors the glance of the sunbeams bright,
And breaks for joy into happy song ;
As it flows, it sings in a silvery voice
To the pebbles, "The Summer has come, Rejoice !"

Sweet is the message the Summer brings,
And hearts that were weary with grief and pain
Grow strong at the sound of her rustling wings,
And hopes long buried arise again ;
And we join the song with great nature's voice,
"The beautiful Summer has come, Rejoice !"

YOUTH'S TWILIGHT REVERIE.

Sometimes in the twilight I sit and ponder,
Ponder o'er things that are old and strange,
Ponder o'er fancies wild and daring
And give to the wings of my spirit free range.
Give to my bright bird of fancy permission
To soar where he wishes, and bring to my view
All wonderful things in the world of the marvelous,
All I can muse upon, old or new.

When day with its duties and pleasures is ended,
And shadows are creeping o'er hill and dale,
Telling that night with her pall of darkness
Will soon cover over the twilight pale,
I love to sit in my chair by the window
And muse 'till the last faint ray has fled,
'Till darkness has buried my air castles lofty
In the ruins of sunset, and day is dead.

I think of the past and I dream of the future,
Which the veil of the present shuts out from my view,
And wonder if it will be shadow or sunshine,
Darkness, or fair shining skies of blue ;
Or whether the light and shade will be mingled
And sorrow and joy will both blend in my fate ;
Whether life is most over, or to the hereafter
Long years for my summons I yet shall wait.

Thus I wonder and muse in my chair in the twilight,
And much of grave matters I ponder o'er,
And I build lofty castles of air that are peopled
With shapes that have thronged in my dreams before ;
I talk to their shadowy forms in my fancy,
And move with them all through the spacious halls,
Where the rosy clouds of sunset splendor,
Tinted with gold, form the roof and walls.

While I sit and dream strange dreams in the twilight,
And think over projects that I have planned,
The shadows are creeping on slowly and quietly,
And darkness is fast falling over the land ;
And as the day's last glimmer is going
And leaving no faintest glimpse of light,
With the last faint ray of the fading twilight,
I wake from my reverie, and lo ! it is night.

UP THE HILL.

Up a steep and rocky hillside
Climbed a little child one day,
Heedless of all stones and briers,
Hastening, panting all the way ;
Hair all flying in the breezes,
On she went with cheeks aglow,
Though her little feet were weary,
And her steps became more slow ;
But she never faltered till she
Reached the summit, then stood still,
And with childhood's joyous rapture
Shouted, "I am up the hill!"

Backward through the misty shadows
Of the years that since have flown,
Comes that echo to my fancy
Like some long forgotten tone.

I can almost feel the bounding
Of that baby heart again,
As the world lay stretched before me
In that long ago ; since then
I have climbed another hillside,
And am toiling upward still,
And the evening shades, as ever,
Find me climbing up the hill.

But this hill seems so much longer,
And the way sometimes so steep,
That 't is hard to keep the pathway,
And to shun its pitfalls deep ;
Then the briers on life's journey
Harder are to thrust aside ;
Nearly all that early courage
With that fresh young hope has died ;
One by one my dearly loved ones
Have passed on, are passing still,
Leaving me all sad and lonely
Slowly climbing up the hill.

But the summit of life's mountain
Must be very near to me,
And I know when I have finished

All my climbing, I shall see
That if oft times I have journeyed
When I fain would stop and rest,
It has made that rest but sweeter,
For the Father knoweth best ;
And perhaps ere long—who knoweth?—
I may cry out with a thrill
Of that same old joyous rapture,
“I am safely up the hill !”

A BROKEN CHAIN.

My friend, I've searched my heart, as you have prayed
me,

And find all calm and cold its depths within ;
My fate with thine can never be united,
And yet—this might have been.

A year ago, the words within this letter
Had made the rushing tides of joy begin
To flow through every vein—and now—I wonder
That e'er it could have been.

I chide you not, nor do I wish to blame you,
Because you cared another heart to win ;
I even thank you that you broke your fetters,
And that this has not been.

I cannot tell in what mysterious manner
In peace subsided all the heart's wild din ;
I only know this cannot now be, ever,
Although it might have been.

WHAT WOULD LIFE BE?

If some sad moment I should wake to know
That all the friends I love and hold most dear,
If I were dead, would shed no bitter tear,
All the dear friends I love and cherish so,
What would life be?

If I should feel that in all God's great earth
No heart responsive throbbed unto my own;
That I was left in all the world alone,
With none to feel my woes or share my mirth,
What would life be?

I could not wish to live another day
If this I knew, but I should pray to die;
Such a bleak desert, cold and bare and dry,
With such a leaden sky so dull and gray
This earth would be.

O, those bright cheering gifts from Heaven above,
How little do we prize them till they flee !
For without friendship, hope, or charity,
Without the boons of sympathy and love,
What would life be ?

THE MOSQUITO AND THE BUG.

(For Children.)

Once a young mosquito
Cried and cried and whined,
Just because his color wasn't
Suited to his mind.

Said he could be happy
If he just was red,
But that a black mosquito
Might as well be dead.

Near this young mosquito
Lived a scarlet bug,
In a hole down in a tree trunk,
Just as nice, as snug.

But he mourned and fretted
Because he wasn't black ;
Red was so very common
Painted on your back.

So the silly creatures
Pined away and died,
And the ant the old grave digger
Laid them side by side.

Then upon the tombstone
He wrote the words below ;
“ Here lie Bug and Mosquito—”
A mournful tale of woe—

“ Both died broken-hearted ;
Reason is, 'tis said,
Red one wanted to be black,
And black one to be red.”

When they all had read it,
Every insect said
That such *very* foolish creatures
Might as *well* be dead.

OVER THE SEA.

I sent out in spring time's bright morning a boat,
 Freighted with much that to me was dear;
I watched it far over the waters float,
 And bade it good-bye with no thought of fear:
I said "It will safely return to the bay—
My boat that is sailing away and away
 Over the peaceful sea."

The spring time had passed and the winter was come,
 Breakers were booming far over the main,
The storm king's loud blast made my spirit dumb,
 And deep in my heart was a secret pain;
I cried "Can it ever the dark tempest brave?
My boat that is tossing on every wave,
 Over the angry sea."

The seasons rolled by, with their sunshine and storm,
 Hundreds of boats entered into the bay,
But never there came that familiar form,

And hope's fading embers at last died away :
I moaned "It will never return to me more—
My boat that so long ago sailed from the shore
Over the cruel sea."

The Angel of Faith placed her hand on my brow,
Quieted all of my feverish pain ;
And I am content to wait ; for now
I know I shall see it ere long again,—
My boat that has sailed to another bay,
In the beautiful isles that are far away
Over the jasper sea.

LIFE'S UNANSWERED QUESTIONS.

Why are the mysteries of this great creation
So closely hidden from our mortal view,
That though we strive to solve its tangled problems
With reasonings profound, when once we fancy
We have a key unto some wise conclusion,
We find 't is but a wonderful delusion?
But far from profiting by the sad blunder,
On something else we then begin to ponder
If we cannot in some way find a clue.

Why are we born with restless, longing spirits,
That crave a something that we never find?
Eager to grasp at empty, fleeting shadows,
And ever having some fresh hope to spur us
To mightier attempts and new desires,
That kindle in our bosoms living fires,
Which fiercely burn until we see our folly
When 't is too late, then brood in melancholy,
And wonder that we could have been so blind.

Why is it that the end of our desires,
If 't is attained, is never half so sweet ?
That happiness lies not so much in owning
As we imagine in our early dreaming,
But rather that the charm is in pursuing,
Which fled, we then improve our time in viewing
Some future pleasure which in turn is longed for,
But gained is not as precious as before,
And then at last is trampled under feet.

Why is it that oftentimes when worn and weary,
Fair glory glimpses we can dimly see?
Faint scintillations on our life's horizon
That lift our souls and cheer us on our journey,
So we can start with hope's star shining o'er us,
Willing to run the long race set before us—
Oh why, in all its many gains and losses,
In all its joys and sorrows, hopes and crosses,
Is our life such a wondrous mystery ?

REMINISCENCES.

Many a simple object we could name,
 However small its seeming worth may be,
Has to some heart a sweet significance,
 A meaning deep that no one else can see.

A little worn out shoe, a top or ball,
 A broken ring or faded lock of hair,
A withered flower or ribbon can recall
 Sweet memories, sad, and yet divinely fair.

Just now the children shouted out a name
 Familiar to my call in other years;
My faltering lips its accents scarce could frame,
 While looking backward through a mist of tears.

My stately neighbor whom I deemed so cold,
 One day forgetful of her ermined pride,
Wept as she kissed a little painted toy
 “ My baby held it just before he died.”

Thus life goes on. We turn unto our toil ;
Of any loss time heals in part the pain,
But rusty heart strings vibrate with a thrill
When memory's fingers touch the chords again.

Last night I heard an old familiar song,
Far from my sight the crowded room was driven,
Heedless I sat while moments flew away,
Of one alone I thought, of one in Heaven.

LITTLE LILLIE'S ANSWER.

(For Children.)

What is Christmas? Why, auntie,
Such a question I never did see ;
That is the time when people
Have a beautiful Christmas tree.

And mamma says they have it
'Cause Jesus was born that day ;
He lives way up in Heaven,
And I talk to him when I pray.

And folks hang up their stockings,
And when they have gone to sleep,
Santa Claus comes down chimney
And fills 'em all up with a heap

Of apples and nuts and candy,
And mine had a rubber ball ;
New Year's is good, and Thanksgivin',
But Christmas is best of all.

TWO SONGS.

I.

A bird swung high on a leafy bough
And a maiden sat below—
Sat and watched with a pensive brow
The midsummer breezes blow
The blossoms down from its royal crown,
As the tree swayed to and fro.

High up in the tree-top swung the bird,
And warbled a happy song;
The maiden listened, her pulses stirred,
With their answering echoes throng.
“He sings of love in his home above,”
She whispered, “the whole day long.”

“It is well that the happy birds should sing,
That the sky should be fair and clear,
That flowers should spring and the wild woods ring

With carols of joy and cheer,
For the world is bright and the heart is light
Since summer and love are here."

II.

The summer had passed and the birds had flown,
The trees stood brown and bare,
Save when the wind, with sorrowing moan,
A stray leaf whirled in the air;
And the maiden stood again in the wood,
But her brow was marked with care.

Far off in the distance a crow she heard
That was croaking a dismal strain;
The maiden listened, her pulses stirred,
And her heart was filled with pain;
"He mourns," she said, "for a joy that is fled,
And that never can come again."

"It is well that the withered leaves should fall,
That the flowers should fade," she said;
"That the crow from the gloomy woods should call,
For life is as cold and dead
As the branches above, since joy, with love
And the summer birds, has fled."

EVENTIDE.

'Tis eventide ; the twilight slowly falls ;
The sunset glory lingers in the sky
As if 'twere loath to fade ; the twittering calls
Of birds grow fainter in the branches high,
And through the perfume laden summer air
Sweet evening sounds are floated far and wide,
While cooling breezes whisper everywhere
At eventide.

Forgotten in the tranquil sunset hour
The dust and heat that marked the weary day ;
Forgotten is the tempest's scathing power
Whose clouds roll backward, for now far away
Their silvery linings shine with splendor soft,
While a fair rainbow melts its regal pride
In the departing light the day has doffed
At eventide.

A sense ineffable of rest and peace
Comes down—of triumph after care and pain ;
The angel Faith bids all complaining cease,
And trusting souls grow strong to toil again :
He knows who crowned the storm with rainbow bright
How best the human heart is purified ;
Life's little day will vanish out of sight,
When last in glory of the sunset light
At eventide.

A MAIDEN'S SOLILOQUY.

ON READING A LOVE LETTER.

He has vowed for aye to love me ;
He has sworn by my eyes of blue
That his heart is faithful and true
As the spreading skies above me.

But eyes are apt to grow old and dim,
And mine may not always be blue ;
And his love might change if they changed their hue,
So I cannot trust to him.

He has showed me a costly ring ;
He has vowed by my golden hair
That if I will consent the ring to wear
It will only happiness bring.

But hair is sure to fade and grow gray,
Mine will, if I live, I know ;

And for fear my happiness might fade so,
I must surely say him nay.

He has asked me to be his bride ;
He has sworn by my youthful beauty
That he will adhere to the path of duty,
And be my joy and pride.

But beauty is fleeting, and so he might
When a few years have passed away,
Forget the promise he made to-day,
And swerve from the path of right.

He asks me by our mutual love
To listen to his prayer,
And he wishes to me his heart were bare
As it is to God above.

Then he knows my answer Heaven would bless,
It would save him a world of woe ;
Well, my answer before would have surely been No.
But—I think I had better say, Yes.

NIGHT.

Behind the western hills of purple twilight
Dips the red, wearied Sun into the sea,
And from that dim, mysterious land of shadows
Whither the day has vanished, o'er the lea
Comes forth with step majestic, Night, the wild and free.

Oh, but she comes all clad in regal splendor,
This black-robed spirit queen who now appears,
And she hath many servants to attend her,
The evening winds and hours, the starry spheres ;
Since time hath been she ruleth, nor counts her sway by
years.

From land to land she swiftly travels onward,
Greeted with joy by many a weary breast,
Touching her wand of sleep to aching eyelids,
And soothing troubled spirits into rest—
Wher'er her fancy tendeth an ever welcome guest.

And now beside some couch she softly murmurs,
“Sleep on, poor fools, and dream while yet ye may;
Whose hearts, could ye but read to-morrow’s story,
Would break with anguish, knowing not to-day
How one can live and suffer—sleep on and dream away.”

THE RIVER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

We stood on the cliffs together,
 My darling and I,
Watching the rushing river
 Sweep swiftly by ;
Over the rocks to the depths below
The cataract plunged with its foam of snow ;
The sunshine lit up the rugged shore,
And the steady sound of the torrent's roar
 Mingled itself with the scream
Of the sea birds circling overhead,
And the spell of the hour on our souls was laid,
 And we stood in a strange, weird dream.

Out on the edge of a jutting crag
 All in a moment my darling steep,
And gazed with eager, questioning eyes,
 Where under her madly the current swept ;

I know not whether an unseen fate
 With mighty power was drawing her on ;
But suddenly, quicker than words relate,
 The rock had crumbled, and she was gone.
A flutter of garments adown the stream,
 A gleam of a golden head on the spray,
And over and under and out of sight
 My beautiful darling was borne away ;
Two white arms stretched with a shuddering cry,
 That one last cry of the parting breath,
Then all was over, and all alone
 I stood, for my bride was the bride of Death.

The ripples danced and the sun shone on,
 But not upon me have its beams been shed,
For summer and winter have come and gone
 Since all my sunshine and joy have fled ;
For ever and ever where'er I go
 I see that picture before my eye,
And in every lonely night bird's call
 I can hear my darling's drowning cry ;
And I loathe the lash of the waves on the shore,
 The gurgling sound as they lap the sand,
And I hate the billows that thunder and roar,
 That are breaking and dashing forevermore
 On the desolate dreary strand.

Yet I cannot think that my darling
Lies buried beneath the wave ;
That beautiful form could never
Have found a watery grave ;
For even Death's heart would soften
When he gazed on her exquisite face,
And I think in his boat he would bear her,
And over the waters would row her,
Far on to her native place ;
Far on to the golden city
That lieth beyond the tide,
And I know for that precious burden
The gates would open wide ;
And the stream that bore her to heaven
O'er eternity's soundless sea,
Was a river of life to my darling,
And a river of death to me.

TURN BACKWARD, LEAVES OF TIME.

Turn backward, leaves of time,
That I may scan your pages o'er;
Day's busy noises die away,
I sitting in the twilight gray
Muse over what is now no more;
I'm weary of the moment's flight,
And I would read the past to-night;
Turn backward, leaves of time.

Turn backward, leaves of time,
And linger o'er that golden page,
When life was all without alloy,
With tears for sadness, smiles for joy,
The truest of my pilgrimage,
Because that my own heart was true;
That I may read this through and through,
Turn slowly, leaves of time.

Turn backward, leaves of time,
But pause not on that cruel leaf,
When fortune woke my dreaming fair,
And taught me all too soon to wear
A mask of smiles to cover grief;
This has so much I would not see,
That I must pray you pity me ;
Turn quickly, leaves of time.

Turn backward, leaves of time,
I cannot dwell with memory long ;
Show me the right, the fair, the true,
But spare me, oh, I beg of you,
All of the bitter, false, and wrong.
Waking is pain, but dreams are bright,
And I would dream again to-night ;
Turn backward, leaves of time.

THE LESSON OF THE RAIN.

'T is a rainy day, and the wind is wild
That blows on the window pane ;
I sit at the casement, a wayward child,
And list to the falling rain.

I love to hear it coming down,
As it patters and drips and pours,
And think while nature is raging out
That I am safe in doors.

But this afternoon my soul is vexed
And my spirit filled with pain,
As up in the attic alone I sit
And listen to the rain.

The fierceness of the tempest without
Is rivalled in my breast,

For shadowy legions of fear and doubt
Are seeking my soul to test.

Still the rain pours on, as each drop that fell
Would be mightiest in the shower,
And it holds my heart in a wizard's spell
With its strange and mystic power.

The wild, fresh sound of the drops as they fall
Seems to cool my feverish heart ;
And they speak strange thoughts unto my soul.
And tender memories start.

As the wind abates and the rain falls slow,
With steady and quiet sound,
I feel that in the heart of the storm
My passion has all been drowned.

All the afternoon I sit and muse,
And toward the close of the day,
As the last drop falleth out of the clouds,
And the storm is passing away—

At the attic window with contrite heart
There quietly sitteth one,

Who on memory's tablets of battles fought
Can enter a victory won.

'T is a peaceful night, and the breeze is mild
That breathes on the window pane ;
I kneel at the casement, a penitent child,
And thank God for the rain.

PEGASUS IN HARNESS.

To earth thou camest, Pegasus,
Slow sailing downward through the skies ;
Folding thy white wings peacefully,
And gazing round with wondering eyes ;
But what blind fate thy pilot proved
On leaving those celestial spheres,
And idly wandering through space ?
A strange, sad chancing it appears !
Thou wert of Heaven, Pegasus.

What was thy meaning, Pegasus,
To canter o'er the earth's green hills,
To wander o'er her fields and meads,
And quench thy thirst in cooling rills ?
To crop the clover on her banks,
And peacefully to dream and roam,
Praising the gods who gave thee birth,
Then soon to seek thy native home—
Was this thy dreaming, Pegasus ?

Didst thou imagine, Pegasus,
When in the village thou hadst strayed,
The stupid rustics crowding round,
Had for thy use a harness made?
Thy shape was like the horses near,
Their wisdom could no farther go;
They thought thee strange, and wild, and wrong,
They did not see, they could not know,
Thy wings were hidden, Pegasus.

They were not cruel, Pegasus,
They did not mean to do thee wrong;
They only thought to stretch their shafts
Thy slender, supple limbs along;
To bend thy head beneath the yoke,
To teach thee how to serve in thrall,
And slowly plod and draw the plough,
And do their bidding—that was all,
All! Oh, forgive them, Pegasus.

A deed unheard of, Pegasus,
All maddened by thy grief and pain,
To dash along their beaten tracks,
And break the heavy cart in twain!
They surely thought thee much to blame

Who poured their curses in thy ears,
Through which, though now but dimly heard,
Still rang the music of the spheres ;
Couldst thou have borne it, Pegasus ?

They called thee conquered, Pegasus,
When tired of pulling at thy chain,
In dumb despair thou followedst on,
Too proud to show the world thy pain ;
They only thought thee weak and dull,
And pitied now with mocking jeers
Thee bearing in that one short day
The torture of a thousand years,
Strong in thy patience, Pegasus.

But when at midnight, Pegasus,
The tired horses round thee slept,
And all the village dreaming lay,
What light into thy stable crept,
What freshening air played round thy brow,
Awakening memories half forgot ?
As shaking suddenly thy wings,
Thy chain and prison heeding not,
Thou rose toward Heaven, Pegasus.

And in the joy of soaring free,
Did all that little earthly day,
That seemed a long eternity,
Vanish in distance quite away?
The while the air rushed round thy wings,
That cut the blue with rapture strong,
Then did the music of the spheres
Ring in thine ears a grander song—
Re-entering Heaven, Pegasus?

REVERIE ON READING THE FEAST OF ROSES.

A maiden sits by the fire and dreams—
Sits and dreams by the firelight's glow,
While the twilight covers the sun's last beams
O'er a wintry landscape white with snow;
And a fitful flash across the room
Sends ghost-like shadows from out the gloom
Changing, wavering, to and fro.

Her book unnoticed lies at her feet—
The book she was reading an hour ago;
But its meaning and mystery dawn complete
As deeper and deeper the shadows grow;
And she lives it over, the strange sweet tale
Of life in a far off flowery dale,
In visions that shadow-like come and go.

She sees a tropical garden fair,
Where thousands and thousands of roses blow;
Where dancers are fanned by a perfumed air

And brilliant lanterns swing to and fro ;
While ever the moonlight and starlight's sheen
Is glancing a network of boughs between
On the fairy-like picture that lies below.

She hears in her fancy sweet music roll,
As out on the lakelet the dancers throw
The myriad roses, while over her soul
The wildness and charm of the moment grow,
And her heart is stirred, and her pulses beat
To the rythmical tread of the dancers' feet,
And her thoughts flow on with the music's flow.

THE CHILDREN'S QUARREL.

(For Children.)

Johnny Hart and Nettie Day

Quarrelled hard and quarrelled long,
All about a foolish play,

For each thought the other wrong;
And each other to annoy

Out among the orchard trees,
Nettie called him "ugly boy,"

Johnny called her "horrid tease,"
And they both agreed, 'twas plain,
Never to be friends again.

Through the box where Johnny wrote
Came that night a little note,
All in rhyme which Johnny took
From his sister's story book.

Slowly frowning Nettie read;
This is what the letter said—

"The rose is red, the violets blue,
Grass is green and so are you."

Johnny Hart and Nettie Day
Out among the orchard trees
Met again in happy play,
Light their grief as summer breeze;
Yesterday's dim quarrel seemed
Far off to their childish eyes,
Better to forgive they deemed,—
Would the world were all as wise!—
And they promised o'er and o'er
N'er to quarrel any more.

Through the box where Johnny wrote
Came that night a little note;
All in rhyme which Johnny took
From his sister's story book.
Slowly smiling Nettie read;
This is what the letter said—
“The rose is red, the violets blue,
The pink is sweet, and so are you.”

MY REASON.

You wonder much my friend, that I should say—

Although the world has showered at your feet
Its treasures as men count them, and that they

Become you well, the peer of all you meet—
I cannot from my heart of hearts believe—

Though all mankind should place you on their throne—
That you are happy, but instead I grieve
That you stand poor—a beggar, and alone.

If in your picking out a diadem

To wear, the mark of honor on your brow,
You scornfully reject the rarest gem

Because you do not prize its beauty now,
Although your crown have all the world beside,

With that, pure gold—without it, common clay—
Do you not see, oh, eyes with wisdom wide,
Not having that, the rest is thrown away?

Forgive me, I speak plainly, but my heart

Prompts me to bring a picture to your view,
Knowing that did you see the better part

You would not pause between the false and true:

I who know all my weakness and your worth,
Better than you yourself dear friend can know,
Dare pity you with all my soul, that earth
Holds chained your noble mind to things below.

For I am thinking of a fair pale face
That from a bed of pain I see to rise ;
The lips are parted with a tender grace,
There shines a radiance in the waiting eyes,
The while she whispers—"Bye and bye my feet
Shall tread the borders of the jasper sea,
And if to dream of Heaven be so sweet,
Then oh, how glorious must the waking be!"

THE THRESHOLD OF THE YEAR.

The clocks in the steeple are striking twelve,
At the sound I raise my head,
And think with a feeling almost of regret,
The year is really dead.

I've watched out the old year all alone,
And my thoughts—mysterious things—
Have traveled so swiftly back and forth,
They seem to have flown on wings.

I wonder what the new year will bring?
Of the hopes I have raised so high,
Will the seeds into bright fruition spring,
Or will many fade and die?

It is well, I think, that we cannot pierce
The mystical veil and know
What the future will bring, or what cherished plans
Are founded on sand or snow.

For I think our hearts would sometimes fail,
And we would begin to pray
That we could lay our burdens down
E'er the closing of life's day.

But certainly a very poor
And unpromising way it seems
To leave the old year with regrets,
And begin the new with dreams.

The last stroke has silently died away,
And the old year has gone, when a din
And a sudden clamor of bells is heard,
They are ringing the new year in.

Their chimes float merrily out on the air,
Bringing thoughts of love and cheer,
And my heart is filled with trust and hope
To begin the glad new year.

LIFE'S LESSONS.

Yes, darling, I am almost through my journey
O'er life's rough road,
And when I hear my summons
I shall haste with joy to meet it,
For life's burden is at best a heavy load.

You do not find it so, did you say, Effie?
But I am old,
I am all worn out and weary ;
But you are just beginning,
And the story of your life is not yet told.

Yet I have learned along my pilgrim journey
Such lessons sweet,
That I now can see so plainly
What before was dark and cloudy,
And my windings brought me to my Master's feet.

Think ever of One who so long before us
The path has trod,
For the rod of God is chastening,
And the ways of earth are many,
And the path of sorrow, darling, leads to God.

SHELTERED.

Little Nita, dressed in white,
 Flitted bird-like all the day,
Round the house, and in and out,
 Here and there in merry play ;
Shone her eyes with happy light,
 Rang her voice in childish glee ;
And her mother, watching, said,
 “She is very dear to me ;
Sweeter child was never yet,
 How we love her none can tell ;
All her paths are strewn with roses,
 It is with my darling well.”

Little Nita, clad in white,
 Lay upon her tiny bed ;
Silken curtains fell in folds
 Round her tangled golden head ;
Curling lashes, cheeks aflush,
 Fairer picture could not be ;

And her mother, bending, said,
 " She is more than life to me."
Sweetly smiled the baby lips,
 And she mused, " These tokens tell
She is dreaming of the angels :
 It is with my darling well."

Little Nita, robed in white,
 Motionless, and still, and fair
As a waxen lily, lay
 In a casket rich and rare.
Pure and sweet she looked, as one
 Never made for doubts and fears ;
And her mother, gazing down
 Through a blinding mist of tears,
Murmured, " Life is hard at best ;
 Of earth's future none can tell ;
She is safe for aye in Heaven—
 It is with my darling well."

HIDDEN FLOWERS.

Within the untrod places of the earth,
Warmed by its sun and nourished by its showers,
Unseen by man they grow, the hidden flowers.

No herald comes to tell us of their birth ;
They spring up silently in mountain passes,
In deepest woods, or under tallest grasses.

On some far tropic island, brightly glowing,
Where strange wild birds are flying overhead,
Their rich, warm beauty lavishly is shed.

Within some yawning chasm softly growing,
On barren deserts by hot simoons blown,
The fairest flowers live and die unknown.

And yet they never question or complain,
But gladly, and with eager hearts and tender,
They give the truest service they can render.

They do not feel that they were born in vain,
Or dream existence might have been completer,
They live, and bloom, and grow each moment sweeter.

Content in knowing they fulfil their duty,
They spend no weary hours of wild unrest,
Content in giving to the world their best.

And glad that earth is richer for their beauty,
And that their perfume sweeter makes the air
When God looks down and sees the world is fair.

Perhaps the winds that bend each flowering stem
Whisper a tender message for their hearing
The others lose—to mortal view appearing.

Perhaps the birds sing sweeter songs to them,
And softer fall on them the gentle showers ;
Perhaps God loves them best—the hidden flowers.

TOO LATE.

She lieth there, all cold and still,
With her hands across her breast :
The look of care on her wan, worn face
Is changed to peaceful rest ;
Nothing she cares for the weary world,
Her soul to a happier sphere
Has taken its flight, and nought is left
But its empty casket here.

Yet they who suffered her to live
Neglected and alone,
As if their late and vain regrets
For cruelty could atone,
Now kneel by her lifeless form, and weep,
And wish her back once more,
That they may into that broken heart
Their wealth of treasures pour.

They build a grand and costly tomb,
And a monument high above,
For that poor soul that in her life
Asked but their human love.

O cruel world! ye are so blind,
So selfish, and so wrong!
Is it only when a bird has flown
Ye can think how sweet its song?

Is it only when 'tis all too late
Ye can see the sad, sad truth?
And do you think your useless grief
Atones for her desolate youth?
Ye gave a hungry heart a tomb,
A stone, when she asked for bread.
Go! spare your tears, they touch her not,
Leave with her God his dead.

SINCE THEN.

I take out these letters, time-worn and old,
Tied up in packets with ribbons of blue ;
And my mind in a reverie deep they hold,
As different scenes they bring back to my view,
And I think of the changes that all have passed through
Since then.

I think how our wonderful castles in air
Have fallen in fragments ; around our feet
Lie scattered their ruins, but none less fair
Has life been for their losses, no less complete,
And we have kept their memories sweet,
Since then.

As I open this packet it tells me of dreams
That were dearer and sweeter than others to me ;
Of a friend when life's spring-time was golden with beams,
And as the light summer streams, calm and free,
But the streams have flowed to a troubled sea
Since then.

And these dreams of youth, like all the rest,
Have vanished far in the past away ;
That friend has gone like a transient guest,
Or the light and joy of a childhood's day,
And "Thy will be done" I have learned to say
Since then.

AN IDLE SUMMER DAY.

O robin in the cherry tree, -
I come to give you greeting !
Sing out your sweetest notes to me,
Till I your song repeating,
Have caught that happy measure
That fills my heart with pleasure.

I will not heed the stupid lore
Philosophers and sages
Have treasured up and pondered o'er
Through all the dusty ages ;
Your wisdom, bird, is sweeter,
Diviner, and completer.

They say the world is old and sad
In learned sounding phrases,
But, robin, you have made me glad
In singing songs of praises ;
Your notes to Heaven are reaching,
And your's is truer teaching.

They say that love is but a dream,
That friendship changes ever,
But we'll defy the ancient theme,
Bird, you and I together ;
What need of dull repining ?
The summer sun is shining !

Let others hasten to and fro,
To earth their tribute bringing,
What care I, robin, so I know
The secret of your singing ?
Your full heart's gladness gaining,
What else were worth retaining ?

So, robin, I will sing with you
Among the trees and flowers ;
The sun is warm, the sky is blue,
The fair green earth is ours ;
And happy hearts are lightest
When golden days are brightest.

WHAT MYRTIE SAW.

(For Children.)

I want to tell you, dolly, the things I saw last night ;
You know I went off early, and left you dressed in white ;
You know 't was Christmas evenin', I told you so before,
And so I hung my stockin's behind the bed-room door ;
And mamma said I'd better go right straight off to sleep
When I got up from prayin', "The Lord my soul to keep."
But I was just determined to stay awake, because
My brother said there wasn't ever any Santy Claus.

I kept my eyes wide open and waited awful long,
And they kept gettin' heavy, but I was pretty strong,
And I just didn't shut 'em, and by and by I heard
A funny sound a comin'—I didn't say a word,
But kept as still as ever, and listened just as hard,
And soon a lot of horses came runnin' through the yard,
And up the house they galloped, and in a minute more
Some one came down the chimney and jumped upon my
floor.

First I was kind of frightened, and when I dared to look,
I knew him by the picture in my big story-book ;
He looked at me a minute, just to find if I could see,
But I pretended to be sound asleep as I could be ;
He had such lots of presents, and such a funny smile,
I thought I'd like to watch him go round an awful while,
But he was in a hurry, and soon he made a leap
Right back up through the chimney, and then I went to
sleep.

And when I told my brother this morning in the hall,
He laughed at me like sixty, and said I dreamt it all ;
Guess I know when I'm dreamin'—he needn't be so smart—
I wish I'd told old Santy not to give him that red cart.
He's eight years old this New Year's, and thinks he's pretty
wise,

But I know Santy Claus, so there, I saw him with my eyes ;
And oh, he looked so funny ! Wish I could show you how,
For, dolly, I was just as wide awake as I am now.

A PRESSED LEAF.

I will place it here between these leaves,
It will lie there calm and still,
But whenever in reading I open the book
My heart with sweet memories 'twill fill.

A leaf is a trifle to many I own,
This is small but its perfume is sweet ;
I suppose if to you on the breeze it had blown
You'd have trampled it under your feet.

The fragrance I breathe as I look in the book
Is the breath of a soft summer air,
And again in the twilight I wander and talk
With a heart free from sorrow and care.

I can hear—but no matter—the dreams that I dream
And the things that in fancy I see,
As I muse o'er the scene that this brings to my mind,
Shall be known to my leaflet and me.

Suffice it to know they are sweeter to me
Than the breath of the most fragrant flowers ;
So I'll place the leaf here, and when lonely and sad
It will cheer up my weariest hours.

EXPECTATION.

The sun is up! The east is filled with splendor,
The little violets and mosses tender
Look fresh and fair.

The joy bells of my heart are wildly ringing,
And birds from every leafy bough are singing
A morning prayer.

But I awoke before the birds this morning,
Can you O sun the eastern sky adorning
The secret keep?

Will you fair birds that sing in leafy bowers
Repeat the tale to no one but the flowers?
I could not sleep.

For o'er the bosom of the swelling ocean
A ship that dances with the billow's motion
Sails on to me.

Sails on and on, while every moment nearer
It brings to me a friend I hold far dearer
Than life can be.

And can you wonder, sun, and birds, and flowers,
I could not sleep away the precious hours
Of early morn,

But woke before the first faint streak of glory
Heralded in the eastern sky the story
That day was born.

How *could* I sleep when o'er the bounding billows
Breaking the blue waves up in white-capped pillows
Of foamy spray—

A ship was coming in the distance clearer,
And one I love was slowly drawing nearer
To me to-day.

BURIED TREASURES.

There are often times in the twilight hours
That enter so silently,
When the fragrant breath of memory's flowers
Is wafted in to me
From the grave of treasures that buried lie,
And for years and years have lain,
A part of my life in its morning time,
A part of its joy and pain ;
That with tears of pity and tears of love
Are silently laid away,
To wait with me and my waiting heart
For the resurrection day.

And some of my treasures are shattered hopes
That had risen, perhaps, too high,
And cherished plans that had sometime failed,
While the world stood sneering by—
The proud, cold world, that has only scorn
For the heights that we fail to climb,
And little cares for the withered flowers
That droop in their blooming time—

With tears of pity for toils in vain,
 I covered their lifeless clay.
I buried them deeply from human sight
 And bitterly turned away,
While the winds that swept to my fancy's ear
 Seemed sighing a sad refrain,
“We come from the grave of your buried hopes,
 That shall rise, ah, never again.”

And some of my treasures are sacred things,
 That are tenderly laid away,
With tears of love on their coffin lids,
 To wait for the break of day ;
The records of hours too lovely to last,
 So dear that through all the pain
I know for the sake of the beautiful past
 I would suffer it all again ;
For still through the heartache and heartbreak of loss
 I can look in my soul and see
The rapture of knowing that once they were mine
 Can never depart from me.

So each and all of my treasures are gone ;
 I have buried them one by one
Down deep in the grave of my heart of hearts,
 And have said when it all was done,

“My treasures are buried to rise no more”—

God knows with what bitter pain—
To rise no more while my life shall last,
No, never on earth again ;
They wait for the resurrection morn,
My treasures so still and cold ;
They are dead, and buried, and turned to dust,
And years have over them rolled.

• O, foolish heart ! that could ever dream
These parts of thyself could die
While a single throb of thy being remained,
Though crumbled in dust they lie ;
For the dust has blossomed down deep in the grave,
And has grown to the light of day—
Has blossomed into forget-me-nots,
That will bloom forever and aye ;
And oftentimes, in the twilight hours,
From the grave where my treasures have lain,
The fragrant breath of memory's flowers
Is wafted back again.

THOUGHTS OF RELIGION.

SUBMISSION.

All is of God. Then why should we repine
When a loved friend is laid beneath the sod?
Can we not say, "Thy will be done, not mine,"
And bow submissive 'neath the chastening rod?

All is of God. Then why should any care
Oppress our mortal hearts? Can we not feel
When almost we are tempted to despair,
"Earth has no grief that Heaven cannot heal?"

All is of God. And if we cannot see
Each wondrous mystery of Nature's plan,
If sometimes all seems dark to you and me,
And things appear confused and strange to man,

It is because our earthly eyes are dim,
And we too young the book to understand,
But we can trust its readings unto Him,
And follow at the guidings of His hand.

And He who watches every sparrow's fall,
And holds the waves subservient to his rod,
Will sometime make His meanings plain to all,
So we can wait meanwhile—All is of God.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE.

The Way, the Truth, the Life—

The words fall sweetly on my ear,
As, in a foreign land, a kind
Familiar voice I hear.

The Way—life's road seems hard ;
So many paths come to my view,
That I so weak cannot discern
The false ones from the true.

Thus in a maze of doubt,
What can I do but humbly pray
“Give me a path marked out all plain
O Lord, I need the Way.”

The Truth—my soul is vexed
And my whole heart is filled with pain
At all the falsehood wrong and sin
That in my path is lain.

I feel I need a friend

To guide me through my early youth,
To teach me how to shun the wrong;
Oh, may I find the Truth.

The Life—when I am old,
Or death's cold hand is on my head,
When my faint pulse and feeble sight
Tell I shall soon be dead,

I want the new, new Life;
Within my fainting heart to feel
That earth has had no pain so deep
That Heaven cannot heal.

Through childhood, youth, and age,
Through cares with which our lives are rife,
I'll trust in thee, and I shall find
The Way, the Truth, the Life.

EASTER THOUGHTS.

If in the dawning morn

The birds ne'er sang so sweet,
And Nature seems to feel

Her heart with rapture beat,
And all our souls are borne away—
What marvel? It is Easter day!

May not the courts of Heaven

So much of rapture know,
That some wave of its flood

Can reach to us below?
Joy to our waiting hearts to bring,
To bear us up on eagle's wing?

May not the birds have caught

From that divinest choir
Some faint and far-off note

Struck from the heavenly lyre?
Look backward, soul, through years that wane,
See how His woes have been thy gain.

A babe in Bethlehem—
A Saviour, crucified—
A world's Redeemer raised
His Father's throne beside ;
O wondrous tale of wondrous love,
That makes us heirs with those above !

Hundreds of years ago
Was heard that glad refrain ;
Now Heaven the song renews,
And earth takes up the strain.
The grave is now no more a prison,
Joy to the world ! The Lord is risen !

THE SURRENDER.

I had long of sin been weary,
And my heart was very sore,
When I stood one early morning
Outside a chapel door.

And the chant came floating outward,
“Leave all and follow Me.”
And I thought if I should enter
Perhaps I should be free.

So I knelt low at the altar,
And laid my treasures there,
One by one, with sadness, slowly,
For some were very fair.

But one was so very precious
That I kept it; I was weak.
And I thought surely all the others
Will give the peace I seek.

I rose and left the altar,
Hoping I should be blest,
But my heart was just as heavy,
And my soul received no rest.

Then I built a grand cathedral,
And gave alms far and wide,
But my wishes were not granted,
Nor my bright hopes verified.

And none of my mighty efforts,
None of my patient thought,
Gave to my spirit comfort
Or brought the boon I sought.

I journeyed the wide world over
In search of the missing peace,
Toiling from morn till evening,
And finding no release—

Till I came again one morning
To that little wayside place
Where I had left my treasures,
Hoping to merit grace.

And I heard again the music
Of the chant, "Leave all for Me,"
And I cried, "I will, my Master,
If Thou wilt make me free."

Once more I knelt at the altar,
And bowing low my head,
I laid my cherished treasure ;
Then all my sadness fled.

And suddenly all around me
With radiant glory beamed ;
And my heart so filled with rapture
And wonder, that it seemed

That the very gates of Heaven
Were opened to my soul,
And the peace that passeth knowledge
Came down and made me whole.

THE SPIRAL STAIRWAY.

Round and round a spiral stairway
Winds its ever upward path
To the summit of a tower—
Little store of light it hath ;
And the pilgrim, as he enters
And begins to climb the stair,
Can see nothing but the darkness
Stretched about him everywhere.

But he finds, as he advances,
That a single narrow beam
Through the wall is oft admitted,
Which sends o'er his path a gleam,
And he thus climbs slowly upward
Till at length he stands on high,
With the earth far, far below him,
And around him but the sky.

Can we not, while we are working
With the moments to us given,
Make our lives a spiral stairway
Winding upward unto Heaven ?

Not by strides of giant daring,
Just one footstep at a time ;
And our very trials, even,
May be steps by which to climb,

If we conquer each temptation,
Every day as it appears,
Asking help for every moment,
Not for all the future years ;
And the light, though first a glimmer,
Will grow brighter all the way,
Till at last our winding stairway
Leads unto the perfect day.

EASTER.

Of the Bible's stories

Of the Christ who came from Heaven to die,
There is none that, like the resurrection,
Lifts our souls on high.

On these sacred pages

We have read His journeyings on the earth,
Since to Bethlehem's shepherds once the angels
Sang our Saviour's birth.

And the incarnation

We have learned with reverent hearts aflame,
But the glory of the resurrection
Shines o'er all the same.

Of the raging waters

We have heard with listening hearts that thrill,
How they hushed to silence when the Master
Murmured "Peace, be still!"

How blind Bartimeus

Felt upon His darkened eyes a light,
When in accents mild the Great Physician
Spake, "Receive thy sight."

How the dove descended ;
 How the hungry multitudes were fed ;
How He healed the sick who thronged around Him ;
 How He raised the dead.

How in pain He fasted
 Forty days and forty nights alone ;
And upon the mountain top the tempter
 Then was overthrown.

How within the garden,
 Left in human helplessness, the Son
In his utter anguish to the Father
 Cried—"Thy will be done."

How He meekly answered,
 Sitting in the solemn judgment hall ;
How He suffered for the world's redemption,
 How He died for all.

But the resurrection
 Is as ever the divinest theme ;
O'er the story of a risen Saviour
 Brightest glories beam.

For a foe was conquered
 When the angels rolled the stone away,
Death's dark night for aye, through power immortal,
 Then was changed to day.

Thus on Easter morning
Still we lift the grand, victorious song,
Christ is risen from the grave in triumph !
We through Him are strong.

But behind the gladness
Which the world is welcoming to-day
Lies a grander thought that, tinged with sadness,
Sends to us its ray.

Joy and pain are blended ;
Gain was never yet untouched by loss,
And behind our Easter and its glory
Lies the Saviour's cross.

And the hearts within us,
Through life's human seeking the divine
Find within this symbol of His sorrow
For our lives a sign.

This our Easter's lesson—
We may triumph over self and sin ;
We may find the way to life immortal,
And through Christ may win.

And upon life's journey
Help will come whene'er the way grows dim
From the One who trod it all before us,
If we follow Him.

At the cross low bowing,
All we have we now with one accord
Consecrate, in self-renunciation,
Unto Christ the Lord.

Thus the Easter gladness
Fills anew the waiting hearts of men,
Love and joy triumphant over sorrow
Strike their chords again.

Blessed thought! Our Saviour
Hath the portals opened to the skies,
Christ our Lord to Heaven hath ascended,
And we, too, shall rise.

THE GATES OF PRAISE.

With burdened hearts before the throne of Grace
We humbly fall and "Great Jehovah" cry,
"Of earth's vain strife we tire. Oh, bid us hope
To reach Thy gates celestial, or we die!"
"Strive," comes the answer, as we doubting wait,
"To enter at the straight and narrow gate."

"But, Lord," we cry, "our blinded eyes are weak,
We lose that gate save Thou the way shall teach;
Our stumbling feet may fall, our weary souls
May faint before that Heaven we fain would reach;
Far down the ages comes to us to-day
The message—"Follow Me, I am the Way."

Thou art the Way, O Lord, our hearts reply,
Without Thy aid the path we cannot see,
Then, since we need Thee, stay Thou ever by,
Hold Thou our hand, and we will walk with Thee;
Grant us Thy strength, take Thou our load of sin,
Open Thy gates and we will enter in.

How shall we enter in? With doubts and fears?
With sorrowing regrets for wasted days?
O, never would such service Thee requite,
Thou who hast called Thy courts the gates of praise!
Then let thanksgiving through our service flow,
And fearless in Thee may we onward go.

And standing in Thy courts from day to day,
Help us to watch and listen for Thy voice,
And hearing, unto all Thy truth reveal,
That others, too, may enter and rejoice;
So shall we unto weary seekers prove
That all Thy highway is a path of love.

Trusting, rejoicing, laboring may we go;
And lest sometimes our hearts grow faint and cold,
May we remember oft that other home
Whose walls are jasper and whose streets are gold,
And that the thorny path Thy feet have trod
Leads upward to the city of our God.

BACK TO THE CROSS.

Have my hard toilings all these years
 Been but in vain?
And have life's promised pleasures all
 Proved to be pain?
And have my many earthly gains
 Been naught but dross?
Then will I leave them all and fly
 Back to the Cross.

And have I worshipped for my king
 Ambition, pride?
And set at naught through all my life
 The Crucified?
Then will I carry as a gift
 Each precious gem,
And kneel low at the manger bed
 Of Bethlehem.

But is the road a very steep
 And narrow way?
And might my feet oftentimes turn back
 And go astray?

Then will I not attempt to tread
The path alone,
But place my hand in that of Him
I call my own.

And have I need of faith and prayer?
Then help me, God !
Give strength to toil, and grace to pass
Beneath Thy rod,
To one who weary of a strife
For only dross,
Leaves earth behind, and flees for aid
Back to the Cross.

EASTER SONG.

O beautiful Easter, radiantly bright,
Blossoming out of the darkness of night!
Rising to gladden the spirit of earth,
Telling to mortals a Saviour's new birth;
Sweet music floats on the voice of the breeze,
Swell a new anthem the boughs of the trees,
Tuning all nature to sweeter accord,
Joining our hearts to the heart of the Lord.

O beautiful Easter! dispelling the gloom
That shrouded in darkness and sorrow the tomb;
The stone by the angels once rolled from the door
Shall enter its portals again nevermore;
The fetters He broke who ascended on high
Are broken forever—the soul cannot die.
And the glory and gladness the angels sang then
Through Heaven and earth now are echoed again.

THANKSGIVING HYMN.

Lord, in the glad Thanksgiving time
We kneel before Thy throne,
Acknowledging the benefits
Thy bounteous hand hath strown.
For all the blessings of the year
That manifold have been,
For all the lessons we have learned
Its varying paths within,
Our grateful hymn once more to Thee
Unitedly we raise,
For surely there can be no heart
But has some song of praise.

We thank Thee for the earthly gifts
Thou dost on us bestow,
For joys of home, for loving friends,
And ah! could we but know
The dangers we are shielded from,
The ills we cannot see

From which Thy hand hath guarded us,
How grateful should we be !
Yet if Thy guiding providence
Dark destinies should frame,
Oh ! strengthen Thou our feeble hearts
To bless Thee, Lord, the same.

We thank Thee for the blossoming
Of spring's fair morning time,
Sweet prophecy of fairer gifts
In summer's golden prime ;
For birds that swing upon the boughs,
For winds that stir the leaves,
For pictures that the Frost King paints,
For autumn's garnered sheaves ;
For sunset's cloud-land glorious,
For music of the sea,
For all free nature's offerings,
That come, O Lord, from Thee.

We thank Thee for Thy tender love,
For Thy protecting power
To help and save if called upon
In dark temptation's hour ;
For that divinest gift of all,

Thy well beloved Son,
The cross He bore, the fight He fought,
The victory he won.
And oh ! we thank Thee much that Thou
Hast taught us, Lord, to see
That even Sorrow's path grows bright
If we but walk with Thee.

We thank Thee for the glorious hope
Of an eternity
In whose forever we shall solve
All of life's mystery ;
Where Heaven's light forever bright
Will pierce earth's shadows dim ;
Where we shall see the Son divine,
Where " we shall be like Him ;"
Thus in the glad Thanksgiving time
Our grateful hymn we raise ;
Oh, surely there can be no heart
But has some song of praise !

FRIENDSHIP'S STRAND.

OUR LIFE.

The future is an unknown realm,
The veil of which we cannot lift ;
We have no time in dreams to spend,
Each moment is a golden gift.

The past is dead, and in its grave
Are buried hopes, and joys, and fears ;
We have no time for vain regrets
For any of its vanished years.

The present is our time for toil ;
Then let us make our lives complete
By sowing in their early soil
The seeds that bloom most fair and sweet.

To I. C. A.

THE ROSES' GREETING.

Accept, dear friend, with birthday greetings fond,
This floral offering with roses rife,
An emblem of the nosegay of thy life ;
For every year a bud, whose charms unfold
Leaf after leaf, while memory brings again
The vanished hours in familiar train.

Since first thy infant life began to bud,
Twenty brief years have bloomed to fade and die ;
The breath of childhood's blossoms has gone by ;
Now in the garden bed of womanhood
Watch well the soil, and plant with earnest care
Seeds whose fruition shall perfume the air.

Flowers are God's messengers of truth ; they lie
Close to the heart of nature, and they learn
Much of her mysteries o'er which we yearn,
And cannot solve, although we vainly try,
And it were wise their lessons to obey ;
Then listen, dear, to what the roses say.

“We are content,” they whisper, “to fulfil
Our mission, as the moments come and go ;
And hour by hour we more perfect grow
Through sun and storm, for 'tis our Father's will ;
This only is the secret of our beauty ;—
Like us, then, maiden, live alone for duty.”

To L. E. C.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

A year ago this Christmastide,
Close curtained from the weather,
Within our happy little home,
We three were all together;
Now all alone, and far away,
I sit and think of you to-day.

But hark! The music of the bells
O'er all the land is ringing;
It floats to you, it reaches me,
We hear the angels singing—
Ah, happy song! We join the strain,
And seem together once again.

Dear ones at home, to you to-day
I send the season's greeting;
And may the peace the Christ-child brings
Abide until our meeting;
Love travels, though the world is wide;
Be yours a joyous Christmastide.

BIRTHDAY THOUGHTS.

Upon one October morning, when brightly shone the sun,
We said, "The time approaches when our darling is
twenty-one.

We shall see her again among us as gay as a lark in June;"
And the song on our lips kept dancing to our fond hearts'
happy tune,

And a bird had passed at the window, and listened to hear
us say,

"We sing because of the coming of Marie's natal day."

The bird flew over the hillside and whispered it to the
waves,

And the lake repeated the story wherever its water laves,
The breezes carried it softly all over mountain and vale,
Till Horicon's shores at even with rapture had heard the
tale;

And gaily they flaunted their banners of crimson and
green and gold,

And proudly awaited your coming, in their beauty secure
and bold.

We, too, have longed for your coming, and eager we
hasten to-day
The gifts of our love on the altar our hearts have erected
to lay ;
But gifts are at best but barren expressions of love's true
worth,
And tenderest wishes may perish on the spot that has
given them birth.
Your path with our deepest longing we can mark with no
guiding rod,
But we pray that over you ever may hover the smile of
God.

We know that long ago, darling, this life as an open scroll
You read, and its mystical meanings dawned early upon
your soul ;
Of happiness' deep barred portals you carry the golden
key,
And before your valiant watchword gaunt sorrow and sin
must flee ;
But we have discovered its magic, your secret is all con-
fessed ;
You have learned that in blessing others you will always
yourself be blest.

We gaze out into the future, where love's sweet prophecies
lie,

Where stars of hope are shining so tender and clear in the
sky;

We think of the many windings that in life's path may be,
And rest content that one wiser shall mark your way than
we;

We can give you no better wish, dear, than this, which we
fervently pray—

May you always give unto others the sunshine you carry
to-day.

To M. B.

A WISH.

May life's stream through the various channels
That have checkered its course for thee,
Flow deeper and grander and broader
Toward the ocean eternity.

May all clouds on thy life's horizon
Roll back in oblivion wide,
And leave but their silvery lining
To gladden thy eventide.

To M. C. H.

MY HEART'S PRAYER.

In looking backward o'er my life,
And seeing how thy tender love,
My mother, has o'er all my path
Been watching like a brooding dove,
A prayer comes from the altar of my heart
That I may prove my love for thee
Ere we shall part.

I hope, dear mother, ere thou die,
That I may be thy strength and stay;
That thou mayst live to feel and know
How I am striving to repay
Thy tender care in days of yore;
My choicest treasures at thy feet
I gladly pour.

Rather than that I first should die
And leave thy old age desolate,
I would thou mightst before be called;
That when thy latest sun has set,
I may with love soften thy dying bed,
And scatter roses o'er thy grave
When thou art dead.

ONE YEAR OLD.

On an April morning
 'Midst its smiles and showers,
With the tender violets
 And the early flowers,
Came our blue-eyed Charlie.

Swiftly time has vanished,
 With its joy and pain,
And the passing seasons
 Usher spring again—
One year old is Charlie.

In your baby progress
 Through this fleeting year,
Daily you've been growing
 To our hearts more dear,
Loving little Charlie.

Well you wield your sceptre,
 Holding us in sway,
While we all your mandates
 Hasten to obey,
Little tyrant Charlie.

Through your moods and changes,
Only sweeter made,
Tears, smiles, frowns, and kisses,
Mingled light and shade,
Little April Charlie.

Little year-old darling,
None may know to-day
What the future covers,
So we only pray
God bless baby Charlie.

To C. E. C.

A PASSING SOUL.

Another heart has ceased to beat forever,
Another form from which the soul has flown,
Another household desolate and lonely,
Filled with an anguish known by God alone.
Another grave to lie upon the hillside,
Covered with summer's flowers and winter's snow,
While piercing sleet and tender tears are falling
Upon the sacred dust that lies below.

Another soul translated into glory,
Another harp-string struck by Angel hands,
Another golden crown of bliss eternal,
Another seraph midst the wingéd bands,
Another life made one with God forever,
Learning the meaning of earth's tangled ways,
Knowing at last the mysteries of Heaven
Through an eternity of love and praise.

Father, we dare not mourn for these our loved ones

Whom Thou in wisdom callest unto Thee,

Our little life appears so poor and needy,

So vast and boundless Thy eternity ;

Fill with Thyself the aching void within us,

Support us, Thou, as stricken, dumb, we stand :

Grant in Thy tender love that these afflictions

May lead our souls into Thy border land.

On the death of Mrs. F.

MY POET.

Never, dear friend, deny this name,
Though Nation's twine no wreath of fame
To place upon thy brow,
Nor surging passions in thee throng
To give thy life alone to song,
Yet a true poet thou.

Thy poetry pervades thy life—
A tender mother, loving wife,
A constant friend and true,
A mind to seek each daily need
And power to act—thy only creed
The present task to do.


Though in thy individual sphere
Is beauty widening year by year,
Yet wider far thy heart ;
Whate'er is beautiful and true
Upspringing every day anew
Forms of thy life a part.

To thee all flowers from their places
Lift up appealing little faces,
And in their mute sweet ways,
Request from out the tuneful art
That of thy nature forms a part
That thou shouldst sing their praise.

The sculptured marble breathes for thee,
In all of art thy eyes can see,
More than the works of men ;
Beyond the deed to catch the thought
Is thine, which in thy life inwrought,
Blooms for the world again.

Nature for once both kind and free,
In love, while offering to thee
Her gifts from fortune's mart,
Diffused thy light through many places,
And with a thousand tender graces,
Gave thee a poet's heart.

To J. I. P.



LIFE'S WEB.

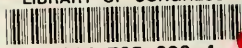
Day by day at their busy loom
The weavers toiled with patient care ;
I thought they never can form assume
The threads that are scattered there,
But slow on my view the marvel grew,
And lo ! a picture rare.

In and out through life's tangled web
The ever varying threads are spun ;
May thy work show bright in eternity's light,
Dear heart, when all is done.

To N. M. C.



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